

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

The amendment to Claim 1 is supported by the specification. Accordingly, no new matter is believed to have been added to the present application by the amendment submitted above.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-11 and 13-19 remain pending. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to a process for producing a diene-based rubber-inorganic compound composite comprising a diene-based rubber and an inorganic compound represented by the following general formula (I):



comprising:

(1) a step of mixing (a) an inorganic compound and/or a material capable of forming said inorganic compound and (b) an anionic surfactant having a carboxyl group or a fatty acid salt,:

and then

(2) mixing the same with a dispersion liquid of a diene-based rubber.

See Claim 1.

Thus, in the claimed process, the inorganic compound and/or a material capable of forming the inorganic compound and the anionic surfactant having a carboxyl group or a fatty acid salt are first mixed, and then this mixture is subsequently mixed with the dispersion liquid of a diene-based rubber.

The rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102 over Kondo (U.S. 6,727,307), Konno (U.S. 2004/0030027) or Konno (EP 1,219,676) are respectfully traversed. The cited references fail to suggest the claimed process.

The cited references disclose mixing an inorganic filler and a diene rubber. The references fail to disclose mixing the inorganic filler with a compound having a carboxyl group, and then combining that mixture with the diene rubber, as claimed.

In addition, Claim 1 specifies an anionic surfactant having a carboxyl group or a fatty acid salt. In contrast, the Konno and Kondo references describe the use of stearic acid. Stearic acid is neither an anionic surfactant having a carboxyl group nor a fatty acid salt.

Since the references fail to disclose the process steps set forth in Claim 1, those reference cannot anticipate the claimed process. Accordingly, withdrawal of these grounds of rejection is respectfully requested.

The rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Gorl (U.S. 6,882,036) in view of Kondo (EP 1,219,676) and evidentiary teachings of Thibon (U.S. 2,656,250) is respectfully traversed. The cited references fail to suggest the claimed process.

The cited references disclose mixing an inorganic filler and a diene rubber. The references fail to disclose or suggest mixing the inorganic filler with a compound having a carboxyl group, and then combining that mixture with the diene rubber, as claimed.

In addition, there is not more than a general reference to an anionic surfactant as an emulsifier or a surfactant in Gorl, Thibon, and Kondo. There is no motivation in Gorl, Thibon and Kondo to particularly use an anionic surfactant having a carboxyl group or a fatty acid salt in place of polyethylene ether (MARLIPAL 1618/25) which is a fatty alcohol. Also, those skilled in the art cannot expect the effect to be achieved with an anionic surfactant having a carboxyl group or a fatty acid salt in place of polyethylene ether (MARLIPAL 1618/25) from the description, taken in combination, of Gorl, Thibon and Kondo.

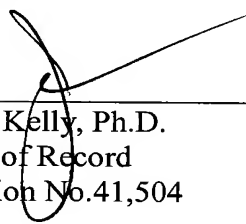
Since the Gorl, Kondo and Thibon fail to suggest the process steps set forth in Claim 1, those reference cannot render the claimed process claimed process obvious. Accordingly, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

The obviousness-type double patenting rejection of the claims over U.S. application serial No. 10/129,330 (the '330 application) is respectfully traversed. The claims of the present application are patentably distinct over the '330 application for the reasons discussed above with respect to the Konno reference. Accordingly, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



James J. Kelly, Ph.D.
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 41,504

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)